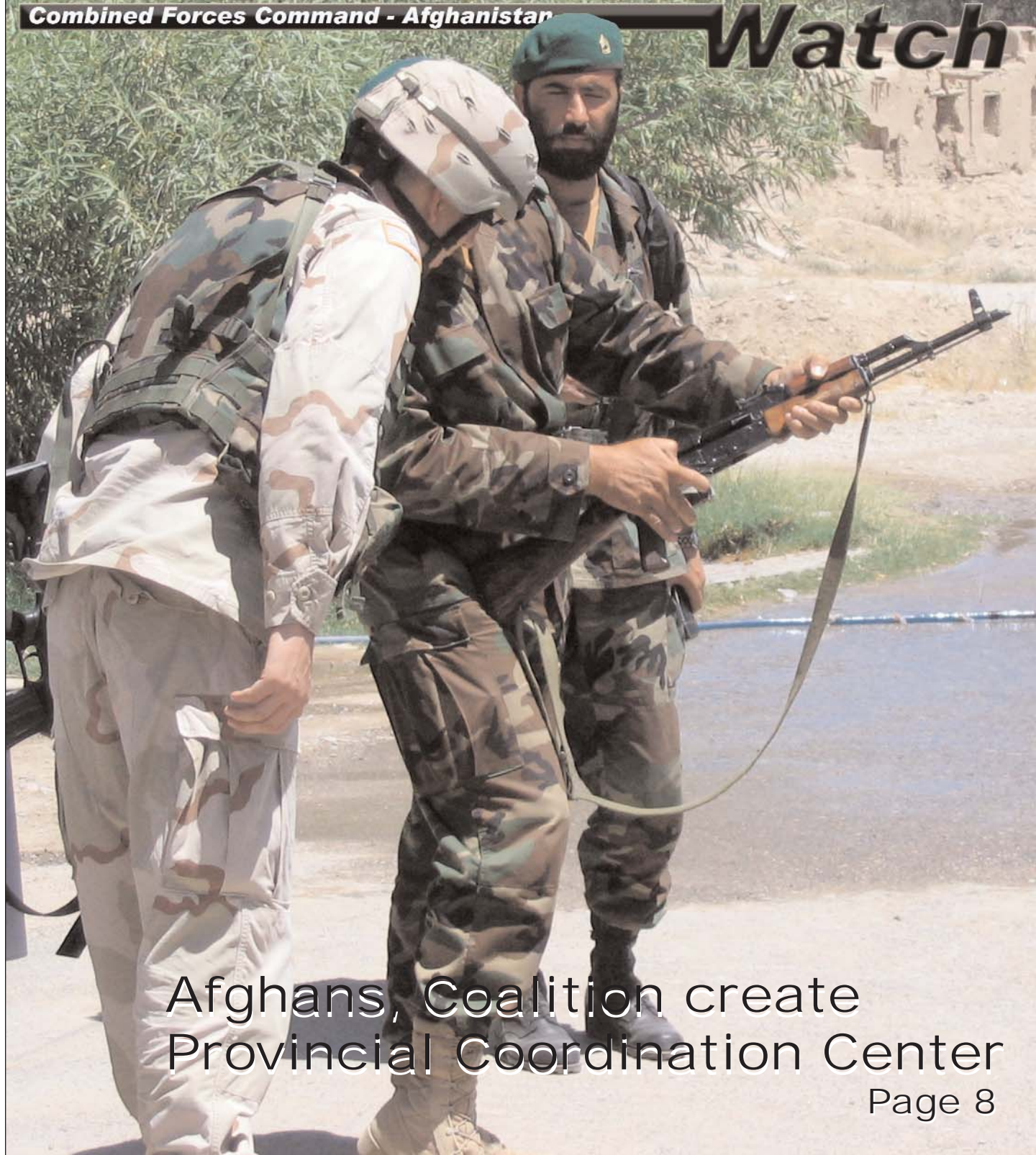


July 3, 2005

Afghanistan **Freedom** Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan **Watch**



Afghans, Coalition create
Provincial Coordination Center

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The Asadabad Police Tactical Advisory Team pulls security on a road during a convoy with the Afghan National Police .

Photo by Army Spc. Jason Krawczyk

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(Cover) Army Capt. Wayne Ehmer, battalion logistics officer for the 3rd Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division inspects an Afghan soldier's weapon during an unannounced alert for the Kandahar Provincial Coordination Center quick reaction force June 8.

Afghanistan Freedom Watch

Freedom Watch is the weekly publication of Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan.

CFC-A Commander - Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry
Public Affairs Officer - Col. James R. Yonts

Freedom Watch, an Army publication, is published each Sunday by the 20th Public Affairs Detachment at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Printed circulation is 6,000 copies per week.

In accordance with AR 360-1, this Army newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military overseas.

Contents of the *Freedom Watch* are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army.

Deadline for submissions is 0730 Zulu each Friday. All submissions are subject to editing by the 20th Public Affairs Detachment, located in Bldg. 425, Room 107, Bagram Airfield. We can be reached at DSN 318-231-3338.

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Canadian troops return to Kandahar

By Canadian Forces Capt. Nicholas Vlachopoulos
Canadian Engineer Liaison Officer

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — A four-man Canadian liaison team is at Kandahar Airfield to prepare the way for Canada to take over the provincial reconstruction team there in September.

The Canadian team is currently situated at the airfield, working with U.S. forces as part of Task Force Bayonet, and is scheduled to be operational by September.

Upon arrival at Kandahar Airfield, one gets the sense of the state of affairs as well as an appreciation of the efforts of those that have come before.

Canadian modular tentage still stands in the location of the old Canadian Headquarters from Operation Apollo in 2002, where Canadian forces integrated with U.S. Forces in offensive operations against enemy fighters.

The road adjacent to the site bears testament to the footprint that Canada left behind here.

As with any theater activation, there are many challenges and coordination issues.

The activities mainly comprise operational integration, force protection, construction and infrastructure and utilities, intelligence interoperability factors, logistics, and many other synchronization activities.

The team is working closely with their U.S. counterparts to establish a smooth transition from the American-run PRT to Canadian-led operations.

The liaison team is the eyes and the ears of Canada and the

Canadian military and provides useful planning input to planning teams back in Canada.

The team works closely with their counterparts back in Ontario at the Joint Operations Group, Kingston. They also liaise with Task Force Kabul, which oversees Canadian forces in Afghanistan.

The team is involved with supporting the establishment of the PRT and assisting with the transition of forces from Kabul to Kandahar.



Photos by S.M. DeWitt

Kandahar International Airport will be the home of Canadian forces during the transition from United States Forces. The liaison team consists of (Left to Right) Lt. Col. Brian Watson, Maj. Rick Williams, Maj. Scott Baker and Capt. Nicholas Vlachopoulos.

The operations in Kandahar, unlike in Kabul, are under the mandate of Operation Enduring Freedom. The provincial reconstruction teams operate within this mandate until NATO Phase III expansion makes its way into this region.



Paintings of aircraft on the wall sit in the background of the road sign leading to the former Canadian headquarters at Kandahar Airfield. In September, the United States run provincial reconstruction team will transition to Canadian forces.

Afghan National Army builds noncommissioned officers corps

By Army Spc. Jason Krawczyk
20th Public Affairs Detachment

JALALABAD PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM, Afghanistan – Noncommissioned officers are known as the backbone of the U.S. Army. NCOs have the experience and expertise needed to execute all missions.

U.S. Army NCOs inspired the leadership of 2nd Brigade, 201st Corps to start an NCO promotion system much like the U.S. Army's.

"In the past, Afghan National Army NCOs were picked based on how much money they had, their family status and what language they spoke," said ANA Brig. Gen. Aminullah Partani, 2nd Brigade commander. "Some had even bribed their way to being an NCO, but we changed that."

With the ANA being a little over three years old, senior leaders are hard to come by, Partani said. After ANA basic training the trainers pick the leadership.

"They pick every NCO slot in a kandak (battalion), from platoon sergeant to sergeant major, and then the Kandak gets sent to a brigade," said Partani.

More than a year ago, 2nd Brigade instituted a new NCO promotion system with the help of its Coalition embedded training team.

"This new system only takes into account soldiering skills, not family ties, status or personal preference," said U.S. Army embedded training team Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Bodo.

Once a kandak arrives in 2nd Brigade, all the soldiers and NCOs undergo testing. The test is comprised of three basic areas. First is a general knowledge test on math, geography and history.

The second test is on language and writing: Does the soldier know Dari, Pashtu or both and can the soldier communicate by writing?

The third test is physical fitness. A 2-kilometer run, pushups and sit-ups.

A list is made of the highest scoring soldiers. The highest scoring soldier becomes the sergeant major of the kandak and lower positions are earned by progressively lower scores.

"The kandak comes to 2nd brigade with all NCOs in place, and after the testing, we see a lot of them getting



Photos by Army Spc. Jason Krawczyk

2nd Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Mod Kaber looks over 1st Sgt. Walig Mohamad and Squad leader Khan Mohamad as they take the noncommissioned officer test.

relieved of their position," said brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Mod Kaber. "This works for us in two ways because a much better soldier now fills that slot and the old slot holder tries to improve his score to regain his former position."

The brigade has tested over 5,800 soldiers in eight different kandaks and the results are positive, he added.

"Soldiers are trying to improve on all areas of their education and physical fitness," said Kader. "We have classes soldiers can take to improve on the literacy and languages. We also have a gym and are conducting physical training some mornings."

The new NCO selection process is a step in the right direction for the ANA, said Partani. The process has greatly improved the NCO corps in the ANA.

"Other brigades throughout the ANA have copies of the NCO selection process and will hopefully be using them in the future," he added.

"There are plans in the future to create an officer

selection packet," Kader said.

Building a strong NCO corps is not something that can be done overnight; it takes time and good leadership, he said.

NCOs are the foundation of a good army, and with a strong foundation, the rest of the house can be strong.



Having passed the noncommissioned officer test, 1st Sgt. Walig Mohamad kept his rank. He assists a group of soldiers taking inventory of shoes for 2nd Brigade.

DUSTOFF: Medical assistance is closer than you think

By Army Spc. Jason Krawczyk
20th Public Affairs Detachment

JALALABAD PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM, Afghanistan – With service members conducting combat operations throughout Afghanistan, it's essential that medical evacuation assets are in position to most effectively support operations.

That is why Task Force Sable has moved one helicopter and a crew to the Jalalabad Provincial Reconstruction Team as part of DUSTOFF.

A crew, with members from the 68th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) from Alaska and Hawaii the 159th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) and the 45th Medical Company, both from Germany, arrived at the Jalalabad PRT May 12, said Army Warrant Officer James Neal, a pilot with the 68th Medical Co.

"DUSTOFF's goal is to preposition assets as forward as possible to make sure the patient can get to care in the first critical hour," he said.

"The care a patient receives in the first hour after the injury occurs is a major factor in whether that patient lives or dies," said Army Staff Sgt. James Carwell, a flight medic. "That first hour of care is the most critical. Getting a patient to a forward surgical team in an hour improves their chances of survival greatly."

The closer DUSTOFF helicopters and crews are to where they need to be the quicker their response time will be.

But, getting DUSTOFF to the site is only half the battle. Once on site, they start their real jobs - saving lives.

"Sometimes we do stuff as simple as moving a patient from one place to another; other times we find ourselves under fire hoisting

an injured patient from a combat zone," said Carwell. "Every mission is unique and has its challenges."

Once the patient is onboard, the first responders have many tools to help them save lives.

"We have 16 drugs onboard, chest tubes, oxygen and much more," said Carwell.

DUSTOFF finds itself mostly handling Afghan children and teens.

"The majority of our calls are for Afghan kids who have stepped on landmines or teenagers operating machinery," said Neal.

DUSTOFF plans to keep expanding the deployment of its assets around Afghanistan. Currently its crews are in Jalalabad, Salerno, Kandahar and Bagram Airfield.



Photos by Army Spc. Jason Krawczyk

A medical evacuation aircraft hovers over the Jalalabad Provincial Reconstruction Team. DUSTOFF has pre-positioned aircraft and crews in the field for quicker response times.

Enduring Voices

If there was one thing you could do personally to help the Afghans, what would it be?



Army 2nd Lt. Osmond Mbaeri

212th Military Police Company

"I would try and build more schools and orphanages. I would also make it easier for orphans to get adopted."



Army Capt. John Koksza

Combined Joint Task Force-76, SJA

"I'd like to convince them Americans are not evil people and are here to help."



Army Sgt. 1st Class Keith Marceau

Combined Joint Task Force-76

"I would concentrate on education and make better schools for the kids. I would also make their childhood more enjoyable."



Air Force Tech Sgt. Reina Voss

Combined Joint Task Force-76

"I would introduce them to more technology to make life easier."

Graduations broadcast to deployed parents

By Army Sgt. Tara Teel
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – High school graduation is a landmark for both teens and parents. Many Soldiers thought they would be left out this year.

Army Sgt. Shawn Casey completely dismissed any idea of seeing his daughter, Talisa Anderson, graduate after he found out he was going to be deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom with the 69th Transportation Company.

Fortunately, European military high school graduations were broadcast live for the benefit of deployed parents in Afghanistan, Iraq and other locations June 9-13.

"It was something I never imagined," said Casey, who lives in Mannheim, Germany. "It is a dream come true.

"It made my day that I was able to see her and tell her how proud I am," he said.

A coordinated effort between the Combined Joint Task Force-76 communications and personnel sections took place in order to ensure everyone who had a child graduating was notified and had the opportunity to attend the ceremony.

However, because Soldiers with CJTF-76 are with units anywhere from Hawaii



Photos by Army Sgt. Tara Teel

Army Sgt. Shawn Casey, 69th Transportation Company, watches from Bagram Airfield, his daughter, Talisa Anderson, graduates from high school in Mannheim, Germany. "I never imagined getting this opportunity," he said.

to Alaska, and North Carolina to Italy, the level of difficulty coordinating TV meetings increased drastically.

This is the first time that U. S. Army Europe provided Soldiers deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as a few other locations, with live broadcasts and video teleconferences. In prior years, USAREUR broadcast live graduation ceremonies to Soldiers deployed only to Iraq.

"This year's broadcast went smoother than the one I watched from Iraq last year," said Army Col. William Mayville, CJTF-76 chief of staff, who watched his second son graduate from Vicenza High School in the Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, Italy, from Bagram Airfield.

Approximately 25 parents were able to witness one of the greatest milestones in a child's life from three different locations in

Afghanistan. Video teleconferences of about nine European military high schools were broadcast at Bagram Airfield, Kandahar Airfield and Forward Operating Base Aned, in Paktika Province.

"It was a huge undertaking," said Army Lt. Col. Richard Price, CJTF-76 communications officer. "It was a combination between commercial and tactical systems used together to allow the viewer to watch from a desktop and then have a video teleconference one-on-one with their child."

Gen. B.B. Bell, USAREUR commanding general, and the staff in USAREUR conducted weekly meetings to ensure the process was going smoothly and work out the "what-ifs."

"It has been very reliable," said Army Maj. Sam Williams, the director of the Joint Communication Control Center at Bagram Airfield. "Everyone who attended a ceremony was extremely happy."

"All of the Soldiers appreciated the opportunity and tremendous effort from the commanders on all of the levels in Afghanistan and in Europe," Price said. "This mission was important for morale.

"It gave me great satisfaction to be able to apply the technology to support this mission and the family back home," Price said.



Army Sgt. Shawn Casey, 69th Transportation Company, and his daughter, Talisa Anderson, have a video teleconference after her graduation from high school in Mannheim, Germany, while he is deployed to Bagram Airfield in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The well that Fairfield built

By Army Spc. Benjamin Donde
117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KABUL, Afghanistan – Charity knows no borders. It can travel across miles of oceans, cut through language barriers and can even break through the differences in culture and religion.

In the small village of Aloudine in Kabul, the goodwill of two students from Fairfield University, Conn., spanned the globe to bring running water to a community that had none.

Last year, Mikaela Conley, daughter of Army Lt. Col. Christopher E. Conley, a Soldier serving here with Task Force Phoenix, and her friend Aamina Awan had started to raise money for a community in Afghanistan.

The women are members of Students for Social Justice at Fairfield University.

"My daughter contacted me about raising money for a project to help the people," said Conley. "They wanted to do something for Afghanistan."

Mikaela and Aamina raised \$3,000 through donations and rounded up 30 boxes of clothing and toys for the residents of the village.

Conley is involved in the Commander's Emergency Response Program, a source of funds for projects that can help Afghans quickly.

As an advisor to the local Afghan National Army,



Photos by Army Spc. Benjamin Donde

Mullah Gulammohudin, a village elder, washes his hands at the new well after blessing it. The well is a gift to the people of Aloudine from Fairfield University.

Conley had already been working on several other projects. He asked about villages in need and found Aloudine.

"We would have to travel a long way to get drinking water. It's not easy for us to find," said Mohamad Akram, village elder. "Now we have a natural way to get pure drinking water."

Work began on a well and a pump to bring up the water.

"We are very happy with the help that we received from America," Akram said. "We like the United States and we want their help."

The money that the students raised was used for the technical portion of the well. The people of the village helped build it.

"As a father I am extremely proud of my daughter and the work she did," Conley said at the dedication of the well. "My daughter Mikaela has always had empathy for people less fortunate and I am pleased and impressed that she and her friend Aamina put this project together."

A plaque was placed on the well that reads, "A gift to Afghan children from Fairfield University." It's also inscribed with a proverb: "Through peace, there are all good things."

"The devastation that has befallen Afghanistan by wars, drugs and violence is overwhelming, but it's the little things that have allowed this country to find peace," Conley said. "This country is in the process of rebuilding and it's going to happen one well at a time."



Army Sgt. Adam M. Ecker of the Indiana National Guard passes out toys, donated by Fairfield University, to the children of Aloudine village in Kabul.

Setting up shop for the Afghans



By Army Pfc. Vincent Fusco
20th Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR CITY, Afghanistan – The civic and military forces of Afghanistan are being instructed on how to reach out and touch someone, so to speak, with a Provincial Coordination Center.

The mission of the PCC has been to synchronize and coordinate efforts of the Afghan National Police, Afghan National Army, the Afghan intelligence agency and Afghan Highway Patrol, and effectively react to threats that seek to destabilize and discredit the government of Afghanistan, said Army Capt. Wayne Ehmer, battalion logistics officer for the 3rd Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division.

To help accomplish the mission, the center has one representative from each office, as well as a quick reaction force of 100 men: 50 from the ANA, 40 from the ANP, and 10 Afghan intelligence specialists.

In addition, the PCC houses an administration office and a completely Afghan-run communication center.

“Right now we’re training personnel on operations,” said Army Sgt. 1st Class James Krause, an operations noncommissioned officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173rd Airborne Brigade. Krause and his team will also liaison with the PCC to offer guidance.

Krause and Ehmer have been giving instruction on command and tactical operations, assisting with a comprehensive security plan developed by the center for Kandahar Province.

“Eventually, the PCC will become a joint tactical operation center for all government agencies operating within Kandahar Province,” said Krause.

To prepare the staff for this goal, Krause and Ehmer have assisted them in setting up a productive TOC on a renovated facility with a networked computer infrastructure and maps of different scales.

“In less than 30 days, we went from a concept to a secure, operational facility,” said Ehmer.

Krause said, “These are experienced soldiers, police and intelligence officers who fought against the Soviets.”

Krause and Ehmer have been able to focus more on teaching techniques and have had little or no need for teaching basic protocol.

“We’re not trying to reinvent the wheel here,” said Krause. “We all work together and reach an understanding of how each other’s techniques work here.”

“We use battle tracking to know where the positions of our soldiers are and how to best direct them in a given situation,” said Krause. “If we know what opposing forces are in the area, we can have our soldiers check it out.”

In the event of a situation within Kandahar Province, the

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Afghan coordination center brings together election security resources

By Army Pfc. Vincent Fusco
20th Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR CITY, Afghanistan—Recent anti-Coalition militants' desperate attempts to destabilize the region, such as the improvised explosive device that hit a convoy going through Kandahar City June 13, have prompted Kandahar City government and civic leaders to discuss increased security measures for the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Dr. Mohammad Hamayon, the deputy governor of Kandahar Province, met with Army Lt. Col. Paul Moses, the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team commander, Tim Robertson, a regional security officer from the United Nations Office of Project Support June 13.

"So far in the election process, we have district field coordinators conducting reconnaissance on different sites to prepare for voter registration," said Robertson.

Voter registration equipment has

been transported to Kandahar and is ready to be set up.

There will be central sites in Kandahar and Spin Boldak and three or four in each district, plus additional sites for nomadic Kuchis.

Last year, enemies attempted to disturb presidential election sites but could not with security forces present in the area, said Hamayon. In addition, the city was heavily patrolled and most district centers were secured by the Coalition.

A problem in reaching the goal of provincial security was the number of personnel available to patrol the districts and how to coordinate them.

"There's always so many places to be, but not enough troops," said Moses, a Rochester, N.Y., native from the 360th Civil Affairs Brigade in Fort Jackson, S.C.

The solution reached in the meeting was to use the Kandahar Provincial Coordination Center as an elections joint operations center during and after the registration process.

The joint plan will generally be to have 10 Ministry of Interior personnel from Kabul close to each site as main security, with soldiers from the Afghan National Army patrolling the area outside each station with assistance from the Coalition.

Because the PCC is considered a hub for Coalition assistance and Afghan security and intelligence, it was considered the best facility to coordinate ANA, MOI, UNOPS and other security forces for the event.

The centralized operations facility could also coordinate security from outlying villages to each district or city.

Additionally, the chief of Afghan intelligence proposed that undercover intelligence specialists could be provided to each site, with civilians who know the area well to assist in security and information.

"I see it as a good plan for us to work together," said Robertson.

Afghan voter registration starts June 25 and continues for four weeks.

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center will have an emergency meeting between all agencies and decide on a course of action.

Government forces in the province will relay what they have and what their operations have been, and the PCC

works with information from other agencies in the area to decide what actions are necessary.

In theory, there would be no need to deploy soldiers to an area that has Afghan forces available to dispatch.

"We can use the QRF we have to supplement the forces we have out there

or to act as reserve in case we really need them to," said Krause.

The agency representatives at the center devise a viable plan which is sent up to the governor of Kandahar, who can approve, change or disapprove as he sees fit.

Once approved, the plan is sent to the forward operating base and is executed by Afghan forces, and the QRF if necessary.

Though the QRF has not yet been dispatched on a mission for the center, drills have been done to ensure their readiness.

"We conducted an unannounced alert for the ANA soldiers last week. In less than an hour, all of their men were marshaled. Col. Sayed Zanadain [ANA representative] walked us through the formation as he inspected his men. Even after spot checking a soldier's weapon and conducting a functions check, no deficiencies were found," said Ehmer. "They are setting the example."

"We're putting an Afghan face on the war against terror," said Krause.



Army Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Wood, Col. Sayed Zanadain and Army Capt. Wayne Ehmer stand before the soldiers of the Kandahar Provincial Coordination Center's quick reaction force during an unannounced alert June 8.

‘Don’t cut the red wire’

Airmen clear Kandahar Airfield of explosives



Photos by Air Force 1st Lt. Andrew Schmidt

Air Force Staff Sgt. Dave Baker of the 451st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight dons a bomb suit in preparation for a manual approach to an explosive device in southern Afghanistan. Air Force Senior Airman Charles Hodge helps to adjust the suit. Baker is deployed from Kadena Air Base, Japan, and Hodge is deployed from Luke Air Force Base, Ariz.

By Air Force 1st Lt. Andrew Schmidt
451st Air Expeditionary Group

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - There are many unsung heroes in the Global War on Terrorism. From the security forces Airmen who man the front gates to the supply clerks who keep the war fighters equipped, it takes a strong effort behind the scenes to keep

today's Air Force operating.

At Kandahar Airfield, however, it's difficult to find a group that does more to keep everyone safe than the Airmen of the 451st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight.

During the 1980s, the area saw some of the worst fighting of the Soviet occupation and, as a result, there is an abundance of earth-covered bombs, mortars and rockets just waiting to be discovered - or stumbled upon by

unsuspecting Airmen.

According to Air Force Master Sgt. Jim Skyberg of the 451st EOD, that was only the beginning of the unexploded ordnance issues here.

"After the Soviets left, the locals came in and picked up everything salvageable. If there was aluminum or copper in the casings, or just something they could use, they took it and dumped the munitions or whatever the hazard was on the ground."



(Left) Air Force Senior Airman David Gerig of the 451st Explosives Ordnance Disposal Flight assembles a remote fire device in preparation of a controlled detonation at Kandahar Airfield. Gerig is deployed from Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan.

(Below) Air Force Senior Airman Eric Benbrooks of the 451st Explosives Ordnance Disposal Flight places C4 explosives on a pile of recovered ammunitions found in the area around Kandahar Airfield in preparation of a controlled detonation.

ning of Operation Enduring Freedom in late 2001.

"It's definitely a weekly thing to find UXOs here," he said. "100 mm projectiles, 76 mm recoilless rifle rounds, 107 mm rockets, 30 and 40 mm grenades, projectile fuses, and small arms of all types. You name it and we should be able to find it."

According to the 451st Air Expeditionary Group commander, Air Force Col. Eric Vollmecke, it takes a special type of person to take on the EOD mission.

"They're unique in the Air Force in that they go outside the perimeter daily facing imminent danger as a normal course of their job," Vollmecke said. "To conduct these types of mission requires someone with a steady hand and a complete knowledge of the field - and to be truly fearless."

"Their bravery is on the same par as the rifleman fighting the enemy," he said.

Thanks to their hard work, the area is becoming safer on a daily basis. "People can actually walk around the majority of the base without stumbling into something," Skyberg said.

In addition to providing EOD support for Kandahar Airfield, the flight is tasked with augmenting local Army units in disposing of unexploded ordnance - and improvised explosive devices set by the Taliban - outside of the gate. This provides a special satisfaction to EOD team members.

"These missions can be a really good experience," Skyberg said. "We definitely feel that we're part of the war effort. I feel like we're doing a good thing out there."

"If we can keep people from getting hurt by any type of explosive device, then we've had a good day."

Now, decades later, this ordnance lies partially buried throughout the area, hopefully not to be discovered by a morning jogger or an Afghan worker.

"There's really little threat if people leave them alone, but you never know what can happen if people don't follow that advice," he said.

Upon finding a UXO, the first thing Skyberg's team does is determine if the device is safe to move. If that's not possible, his team will explode the item in place.

To dispose of what has been gathered detonations are scheduled for twice a week,

"We go out and put the stuff that's the hardest to dispose of on the bottom of the pile, and the rockets and mortars or any of the bigger stuff goes on top. We prime it with a little C-4 explosive and make it all go away," Skyberg said, "always in a controlled fashion, of course."

The sound of the semi-weekly explosions is a normal part of life for people deployed to Kandahar Airfield.

In the time that Skyberg has been here, he has seen all types of explosives turn up, including those left over from the begin-



Building trust one brick at a time

By Army Spc. Tiffany Levesque
20th Public Affairs Detachment

GHAN QHADAM, Afghanistan – Coalition forces and villagers held a ribbon cutting ceremony here for Ghan Qhadam Middle School outside of Bagram Airfield June 9.

“By giving our trust to the Afghans we can further build up the trust in Coalition forces,” said an American interpreter from the Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team.

During the war with the Soviet Union, the village’s school was destroyed. When Coalition forces took over Bagram Airfield, base operations allowed the village to use a building for a school, said the interpreter.

The villagers believed the building was too small and set aside a plot of land to build a school, said Army Capt. Matt Pintur, Task Force Eagle information operations.

“They came to us for help with building a school,” Pintur said.

Base operations didn’t have enough money to fully fund the building project, said Pintur. However, an American interpreter from the Parwan PRT had a great plan.

“The interpreter went to the village elders; he told them that the base operations could help to fund the building of the school, but the villagers would need to donate money, time, building supplies, and be in control of the project,” said Army Staff Sgt. Percy Engineer, base operations, 111th Area Support Group, Texas Army National Guard.

After agreeing to the measures put out by base operations, the villagers set up a building committee to oversee the completion of the project, said Engineer. Also, a contractor from the village agreed to build the school at cost.

“We had very little to do with the building of the school; the villagers did it all themselves,” said Pintur. “Besides base operations supplying money, the Parwan PRT donated furniture to the school.”

The community pulled together and developed a feeling of ownership for the school, said Pintur.

“This school belongs to them and it’s their future,” said Engineer.

With this project, Coalition forces have helped the villagers to gain a sense of self-worth, learn new skills, learn to be self-sufficient, and build up community pride, said Engineer.

“Afghans, like many cultures, don’t want everything handed to them,” said the interpreter. “By only giving them the materials to do the job and a good push in the right direction, we can do more for their future than if we do everything for them. This project has touched the people of Ghan Qhadam and is now helping them to build up a bridge of trust between themselves and the Coalition forces.”



Students and family watch as a group of students perform the Atan, the Afghan national dance, at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Ghan Qhadam Middle School June 9.



School girls sing a song of welcoming to the Coalition forces.

ANA volunteers graduate from basic training

By Army Spc. Benjamin Donde
117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KABUL, Afghanistan — As Afghanistan marches toward becoming a fully democratic nation, the Afghan National Army has marched another class of volunteer soldiers to graduation from basic training.

Marking the 36th class to complete the training, 591 soldiers graduated from the Kabul Military Training Center on June 12.

Several countries are involved in mentoring the Afghan basic training instructors, including the United States.

"We are simply here to guide and give direction. We're like quality control," said Army Lt. Col. Billy Rankin, mentor for the KMTC chief of staff. "It's their army - some suggestions they like and some they don't like."

This class was an infantry kandak (battalion).

The soldiers learned basic tasks such as patrolling, conducting an attack, combat operations and marching.

Their training is not finished, however; they still have to complete a field training exercise conducted by the Canadians and will then report to their assignments. This class will bring the ANA strength to 24,710 soldiers when they finish training.

"These soldiers are very keen," said British Capt. Yuba Raj, second in command of the United Kingdom



Afghan General Abdulah, Chief of General Staff Inspector General from the Ministry of Defense, reviews the new troops at the Kabul Military Training Center's basic training graduation ceremony. The ANA soldiers graduated from the 12-week course June 12 and went onto a two-week field training exercise before being integrated into the Afghan National Army.

Afghan National Army Training Team. "They enjoy what they're doing and they have become good at it."

Before enlistment, the soldiers must be able to pass a literacy test and a physical fitness test, which consists of 37 push-ups, 40 sit-ups and a 2.4-kilometer run in less than 10.5 minutes.

"It was a lot of fun and I really enjoyed the training," said ANA Cpl. Saed Osman. "I especially enjoyed firing the mortars."

Osman volunteered for the army because of the suffering his country has had to endure for years, and he

wanted to serve the people and bring security to his nation.

The intensive 12-week training course is broken into two parts. First was a six-week basic training course, after which the soldiers were split into two classes.

One-hundred sixty-two soldiers attended a general noncommissioned officer course, 48 attended a combat leader course and the rest went onto Advanced Individual Training where they received instruction in certain specialties such as reconnais-

sance, transportation, mortars and medical training, Raj said.

"I used to have my own business, but I was interested in serving my country," said Mohamad Shafiq, one of the soldiers recognized for outstanding performance during training. "I learned everything very well and exceeded the standard on all tasks. My family is very proud of me."

These men have made the security of their nation a personal responsibility by volunteering to serve in the Afghan National Army, and it will continue to be their responsibility for their three-year term of service.

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

Afghan and U.S. forces practice firing a T-64 tank during quick reaction drills at the Asadabad Provincial Reconstruction Team site.

*Photo by Army Spc. Jason Krawczyk
20th Public Affairs Detachment*

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.



Enemy killed, another wounded, 16 detained near Kandahar

Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – A joint patrol with Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police and Coalition forces came into contact with enemy forces June 17, killing one and wounding another, in the Shah Wali Kot district of Kandahar Province while conducting operations aimed at locating and destroying enemies.

An ANA Soldier was killed in the engagement. An ANA Soldier, a U.S. Soldier and an Afghan interpreter were wounded.

The joint patrol reported coming under attack by 10 to 15 enemies with

small arms. The patrol returned fire with 105 mm howitzers and pursued the enemy. Air support also responded.

The patrol reengaged the attackers two kilometers north of the original contact site. One enemy was killed and another wounded.

The wounded Soldiers and interpreter were transported to Kandahar Airfield for treatment. The U.S. Soldier was then transferred to Bagram Airfield hospital for evaluation and was in stable condition. The ANA Soldier was treated and released.

During a second incident June 17, 16

men were detained by ANP officers during a joint patrol with ANA, ANP and Coalition forces.

The patrol reported receiving small arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire from 10 to 15 enemies near Deh Chopan.

Shortly after the firefight began the attackers retreated toward a town. The forces pursued and searched the compound where the attackers were thought to be hiding.

With assistance from U.S. forces, the ANP officers searched the village and detained 16 men.

There were no deaths or injuries to Coalition, Afghan or enemy troops.

Improvised explosive devices discovered

Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Three improvised explosive devices were discovered June 13 by Afghan and Coalition forces.

The first device was discovered east of Kandahar by an Afghan police chief who, in turn, alerted Afghan and Coalition forces. Coalition explosives expert responded to the scene and moved the device to a safe location before detonating it.

The second device was discovered near the Pakistan border and was destroyed in place by Afghan and Coalition forces.

The third IED was found southeast of Chamkani and was discovered by Coalition forces who noticed an object in the road with exposed wires. The device was determined

to be a mine that had been altered to detonate as an IED. A search of the immediate area uncovered several objects that are believed to be related to the IED's emplacement. These items were taken to Bagram Airfield for analysis.

“Improvised explosive devices are a method by which terrorists inflict mindless death and destruction in Afghanistan,” said Army Lt. Col. Jerry O'Hara, Combined Joint Task Force-76 spokesperson. “It's not at all unusual that Afghan's routinely come forward and point out the location of these devices. These terrorists have no strategic goals aside from ruling Afghanistan by fear, much like a neighborhood bully.”



Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week

Afghan cultural tidbit

Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week:
Where are my friends?

Dari

Doostani man kuja hastand?
Dos-tani-man-ku-ja-has-tand?

Pashtu

Zama malgari chairta di?
Za-ma-mal-gari-chair-ta-di?

Before the Soviet invasion there were secondary schools in urban areas and a university in Kabul, and a determined family with enough resources could provide their boys and girls with an extensive education. Since all education above the primary level was in Dari, all educated Afghans are fluent in that language, regardless of their ethnic group.

(Source: <http://www.culturalorientation.net/afghan/aeco.html>)

Afghans turn in two suspected IED makers to ANP

Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Two suspected makers of improvised explosive devices were arrested by Afghan police on June 11 near Deh Rahwod and turned over to Coalition forces.

The two individuals, identified as Mohammed Wali and Haji Alim, were in possession of an IED detonation device and explosives. Afghans living in the village where the men were detained identified them as Taliban supporters. Taliban-related documents were found in their possession.

“This is a positive sign,” said Army Lt. Col. Jerry O’Hara, Combined Joint Task Force-76 spokesperson. “Afghans clearly are tired of

the violence and instability brought by these criminals, and they have trust and confidence in both Afghan and Coalition forces to protect them from harm.”

Improvised explosive devices routinely harm civilians as well as Afghan and Coalition forces. Besides killing and injuring Afghans, the devices are notoriously unstable and are responsible for destruction of Afghanistan’s already strained infrastructure.

Since May 1, there have been more than 60 incidents involving the detonation or discovery of IEDs, making their construction and detonation one of the most dangerous aspects of life here.

40 enemy killed in heavy fighting near Deh Chopan

Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Initial estimates by Afghan and Coalition forces indicate approximately 40 enemies were killed in fighting southwest of Deh Chopan after Afghan and Coalition units were attacked with small arms and rocket-propelled grenades June 21.

One Afghan National Police officer was killed and five U.S. Soldiers and two Afghan policemen were wounded. The injuries were not serious and all were transported to Kandahar Airfield for treatment.

Coalition and Afghan forces were patrolling the area as part of Operation Catania, which is a search-and-attack operation

designed to take away enemy safe havens.

Coalition warplanes and attack helicopters hammered enemy positions throughout the evening.

“This mission is a ongoing effort to take away enemy sanctuaries,” said Army Lt. Col. Jerry O’Hara, Combined Joint Task Force-76 spokesperson. “We are not letting up on the enemy and will continue to pursue them until the fighting stops.”

“Coalition and Afghan forces will continue to defeat these militants for as long as necessary to ensure the people of Afghanistan remain free of oppression and tyranny,” the spokesman said.

REALITY CHECK

By Staff
Sgt. Bryan
Dorman

Two enemy killed, another wounded in firefight

Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Two enemy combatants were killed and another wounded north of Kandahar on June 12 in a firefight with Afghan and Coalition forces.

The wounded enemy was transported to Kandahar for treatment where he was in stable condition.

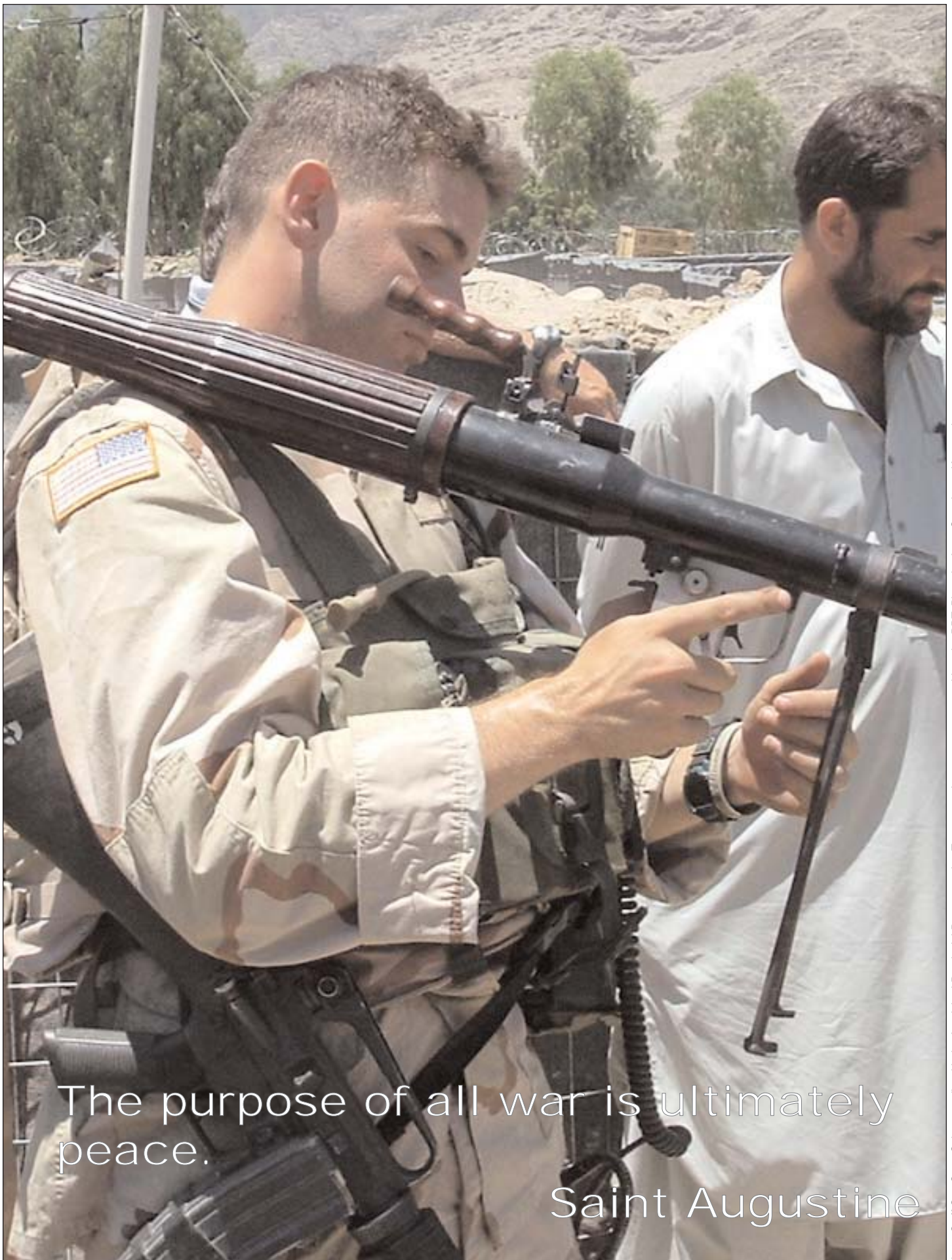
Afghan and Coalition forces spotted a group of 15 armed enemies moving in a narrow valley.

The Soldiers were able to move ahead of the enemy and set up blocking positions. As the enemy moved closer a firefight broke out and most of the enemies

attempted to flee. Afghan and Coalition forces conducted a complete search of the area and detained the remaining 12 individuals.

“These terrorists, in their attempts to drag Afghanistan back into its brutal and oppressive past, are quickly learning that Afghan and Coalition forces will not tolerate their attempts to wreck havoc,” said Army Lt. Col. Jerry O’Hara, Combined Joint Task Force-76 spokesperson. “We, with our Afghan brethren, will make sure Afghanistan has a chance at a bright and safe future.”





The purpose of all war is ultimately peace.

Saint Augustine